Safe Routes to School Overview Webinar 2012

Participant Questions and Presenters Answers:

Q: Will we be able to get a copy of the presentation at a later date?
A: Yes, the webinar will be posted online (including audio) within the next week.
Q: Would a project that provides safe access to school bus stops be eligible, even if it is more than 2 miles from a school?
A: The program is not for school bus improvements.
Q: For how long are quarterly reports going to be necessary? One year?
A: Quarterly reporting is necessary for the duration of the project.
Q: How many days are tallies required for?
A: Student travel tallies should be counted on two days, preferably on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.   The tally form includes information about how to collect the data.
Q: Our agency TIP has a catchall "Sidewalk Ongoing Program" line item that funds multiple projects including SRTS each year. Does this comply, or must our SRTS project be individually listed?
A: The preference is for the individual project to be listed in the TIP.
Q: Is there technical assistance available to put together plans, maps, applications, etc.?
A: It is up to the public agency to develop the Safe Routes to School grant application, but technical assistance is available to develop walk route maps.
Q: regarding the federal statement about drop-off and pick-up, is it okay to make a big effort to improve student arrival and departure procedures with the goal of improving ped safety near the school (rather than driver convenience?)
A: Improvements for pedestrian safety are consistent with the purpose of the program.
Q: What qualifies for "in-kind?"
A: Any project expense that is paid for by the applicant can be considered in-kind.
Q: For mixed use trail proposal, would we include speed and volume for the roadway parallel to the trail?
A: You can include that information for the adjacent roadway - or for a roadway the trail may be crossing - and clarify in the application.   In particular, provide information about the roadway that the children would have to walk on with no trail.
Q: Can staff time to coordinate/implement project be included as match?
A: Yes, but you may need to consider the issue of ongoing costs.   Consider providing information about how funding for the position would continue.
Q: If the project is providing sidewalks that might require drainage improvements (like piping a ditch), is the drainage element eligible as part of the whole project?
A: Yes, expenses such as drainage that are required to construct a sidewalk are eligible for finding.
Q: Would the Local Government Agency have to match the funds that became available?
A: There is no match requirement, but preference will be given to projects that provide a match. There is no minimum or maximum amount indicated for match.
Q: Is there Tech Assistance provided in the completing application?   For example, I work for a non-profit and will be partnering with a school, but we do not have the expertise to complete details about an infrastructure project - materials used, etc.
A: Projects with an infrastructure component should include a partnership with the city, county or state that has jurisdiction for the target location.   These partners should be able to help obtain the needed information.
Q: What does VMT stand for?
A: VMT stands for Vehicle Miles Traveled.
Q: Can enforcement include activities outside of law enforcement?   E.g. school staff handing reminders of safety rules to parents saw breaking rules.
A: Yes, those would be eligible enforcement activities.
Q: Are Neighborhood Greenways considered Safe Routes to School?
A: Yes, they can be a part of a Safe Routes to School project.
Q: Is there no way to know if your project has been selected until June 2013?   I thought I heard something about December...
A: Applicants will not know if their project has been selected until they receive an award letter.   The award letters are scheduled to be sent in June 2013.   On December 15th 2012 WSDOT will submit a prioritized list of projects to the legislature for their consideration.   This will provide information about the ranking of the projects based on the review process.   This is not an indication of funding.   The legislature has the authority to change the order of the list and will determine how far down the list the projects will be funded.
Q: If our project includes sidewalk construction can we also include funds for on-street parking?
A: If the parking is to be used as a separation between the sidewalk and the travel lane than yes it is eligible for funding.
Q: What is the likelihood a project gets awarded if it doesn't have a local match?
A: Local match is not a requirement.   Projects that do not include a match are eligible for funding.
Q: Please give us an example of an enforcement project that would receive full points.
A: That would depend on the enforcement related problem identified in the application.   Applications with proposed enforcement efforts targeted to address an identified problem would be more competitive for funding.
Q: Can we write a grant for multiple items in a single grant request?
A: Yes, this should be based on the walk and bike to school needs of the school(s).
Q: Our projects have several partnerships between different agencies, should we include letters of support of memorandums of understanding in our application?
A: No, please do not provide unsolicited supporting detail.

Q: What are typical grant request amounts? And, what is the overall funding available?

A: The funding amounts that have been awarded in the past vary greatly. Applicants should consider the needs of project and submit a request for funding that will meet those needs. At this time we do not know how much overall funding will be available.

Q: Can the project be part of a larger project listed on the STIP

A: Yes, however if the project is a part of a larger project be sure that it is ready to proceed and be completed by 2015.

Q: Will the State provide CA services?

A: Yes, WSDOT Local Program Engineers will be available to provide CA services. However, applicants must make arrangements for these services before submitting their applications. Contact your Local Program Engineer for more information http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/regional.htm.

Q: Do you allow photographs to be sent with the application?

A: No, please do not send additional materials.

Q: Do the schools need to be public or can they be private elementary or middle schools?

A: A project can be intended for either public or private schools.

Q: If teachers only ask about arrival and forget to ask about departure on the travel tally is that sufficient travel information or does it need to be re-done?

A: The travel tally should provide complete information per the instructions on the tool and that includes arrival and departure information.

Q: Can matching funds be provided by a vendor supplying the equipment?

A: Please rephrase the question?

Q: How far away from the school can projects be included in the application, or what is reasonable: 2 miles, 1 mile etc.

A: All projects must be within 2 miles of a primary or middle school.

Q: What's the likelihood of the School participating in funding the project?

A: The likelihood of the school participating in funding is dependent on the individual school or school district. Applications that demonstrate partnerships may be more competitive.

Q: Has the legislature altered the staff-provided project priority list in the last few funding cycles?

A: Historically, the Legislature has not altered the committee prioritization of projects.

Q: Is there educational curricula you recommend that meets WA State education standards (EALRs)?

A: No there is not curricula for bicycle and pedestrian safety to meet the EALR educations standards. There are examples of curricula that have been used successfully in other schools. Here is a link to a curriculum that has been used in other Safe Routes to School projects http://www.saferouteswa.org/schools/safety-education/curriculum.

Q: Does an app. have to contain all three elements?

A: An application does not have to contain all three elements but it will be more competitive if it does or if the applicant provides convincing information that one or more of the elements has already been addressed in the community and is not needed.

Q: Are prior expenditures on the proposed project eligible for reimbursement after executing an agreement to receive the funding?

A: Only costs incurred after an agreement has been executed are eligible for reimbursement.

Q: Who provides the education to the schools?

A: The education component can be provided by the city, school, an outside group or non-profit.

Q: We have a good potential project and it is not in the TIP. Can I still apply and how?

A: Yes, you can still apply. But you will need to work with the city to amend their Local TIP to include the project.

Q: Will trails and neighborhood greenways used as SRTS be required to be made fully ADA accessible?

A: All projects are required to meet ADA.

Q: Would ADA upgrades to existing facilities be eligible?

A: ADA upgrades are eligible.

Q: If there is evidence of many close calls between walking and biking children and traffic, but they were never reported to law enforcement, would an application get credit for this?

A: It can be listed in the application text, but may score lower than applications that address collisions.

Q: How do you start a Neighborhood watch program?

A: There is a Neighborhood watch website with information about how to begin a program.

Q: What about photographs on the plan sheet?

A: The plan sheet may use an aerial photograph to show the project location or design details.

Q: We are working with a school district that has 2 interested schools several miles apart. The infrastructure improvements would be separate and situated near either school, but the education and encouragement would be coordinated through the school district and serve both schools concurrently. Is this an acceptable model, or would you advise us to choose only one of the 2 schools?

A: It is acceptable to provide infrastructure improvements at two different schools, while coordinating the education and encouragement elements. You may also want to consider submitting two separate applications.

Q: At what date would you confirm that our project is in our TIP? And is our project unlikely to be funded if we check the box that says we'll add our project to our TIP later?

A: We will look for your project in the TIP when we receive your application in May. The project should be in the Local Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), in process of being added to the TIP or there should be a prior written agreement with the individual responsible for adding projects to the TIP that if the project is funded it will be put into the TIP so that it will not delay the implementation of the project.

Q: What is the funding source for this program?

A: We expect that there will be both federal and state funding for the 2013/2015 program. Please submit your project with

the expectation that you may receive federal funds.

Q: We have a lot of traffic circles, but no way to prioritize pedestrian access on the direction to school. Is it possible to put stop or yield signs on the primary ped/bike route?

A: Yes, please consider the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices for more information.

Q: Is there a size limitation on the 1 page concept sheet?

A: No but the reviewers will receive the materials on an 8 ½ by 11 page, if you provide too much information they will not be able to read it.

Q: We have no record of pedestrian related collisions at a given road, would funds become unavailable to our City because of the collision history?

A: No, project locations without a collision history are eligible for funding.

Q: Legally, a project on the TIP must be "reasonably funded". If the project is dependent on grant funding to precede, any thoughts on how we can explain this in the application?

A: If the project cannot be included in the TIP without reasonable funding, provide written agreement with the individual responsible for adding projects to the TIP that if the project is funded it will be put into the TIP so that it will not delay the implementation of the project.

Q: Do plan sheets need to be done by an architect? Also, can a non-profit or certified community development association be the lead agency or co-lead?

A: No, plan sheets do not need to be done by an architect. It is preferred, but not required, that design work be been done by a professional engineer or architect. A non-profit organization can be a co-recipient of funding but they cannot be the lead agency for a project.

Q: What about the problem of supplanting of funds? If a sidewalk improvement project is already in our TIP and budgeted for, and then we receive grant funds for work already planned? In the past, we've been told that federal grant monies cannot supplant existing funds?

A: Applications that already have funding will not be as competitive as those that do not. Consider another project that does not have funding.

Q: I meant licensed engineer when I said architect - sorry.

A: No, the plan sheet does not need to be done by a licensed engineer, however we will be considering the qualifications of the person who completes the plan sheet and cost estimates.

Q: You mentioned that if the application were submitted online a paper copy must be mailed in. Your website states that applications must me e-mailed. Which is correct?

A: Do not send paper copies of the application materials. What I meant was that some of the application materials would have to be sent by e-mail even if you submit an online application.

Q: Are you saying that SOME projects will be Fed funded and SOME will be state or will all projects be a mix? It's VERY important that non-savvy applicants understand the perils of applying for Fed funding without knowing what that entails.

A: We expect that some projects will be funded with federal funds and others will be funded with state funds.

Q: With school out in June 2013 and funding determination made in June 2013, am I correct to that it is unlikely, or at minimum difficult to complete construction of this project during the summer of 2013?

A: Most projects complete construction in the summer following the award.

Q: Are costs incurred while putting together the application and materials reimbursable within the project awards - in other words, can those costs be included in the overall project budget?

A: No, costs incurred before a project agreement is finalized are not eligible for funding.

Q: Do we know what info the Legislature will use to determine which projects get state funding as opposed to Fed? Sorry to be pedantic, this is a VERY important criterion.

A: No, in the past an agency's ability to spend federal funds has been considered.

Q: is there a minimum/maximum percent of grant funding that should go towards education and enforcement?

A: The federal guidance requires that 10% to 30% of our funding be used for non-infrastructure improvements.